



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

*University of Massachusetts - Boston
Boston, Massachusetts 02125*

February 9, 1975

TELEPHONE (617) 287-1900

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 8
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

I was delighted to receive your letter, and to learn that you share my interest in the Hiss case. The information in your letter was of great use, and I hope you don't mind being plied with additional questions.

You asked about the source of my interest in the Hiss case, so perhaps a little history might help. In 1971 I was doing research for my PhD dissertation, on the domestic origins of the Cold War, in which I looked at the roles of five groups in trying to influence foreign policy during the 1940s. Two of these groups were the Catholic Church and the Chamber of Commerce. At the Truman Library in Missouri, I was going through the papers of Francis Matthews, the Chamber's leading anti-communist and head of the Committee on Socialism and Communism (who later became Sec. of Navy and was fired in 1950 for advocating a nuclear attack on the USSR). In Matthews' papers I found a file on Father John F. Cronin, who was the Catholic Church's anti-communist expert, indicating that Cronin had been secretly paid by the Chamber to prepare a large-scale propaganda campaign on the theme of the communist danger. I later interviewed Cronin, who now teaches at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and who is a repentant liberal. Cronin told me that he had prepared a secret report for the Bishops in 1945, in which report he cited Chambers' allegations that Hiss headed a communist cell in the government (although Chambers was cited not by name but as "editor of a national magazine.") Cronin told me that he had received FBI reports during the war from Bill Sullivan and others, and that early in 1947 he met Nixon and furnished material on Hiss to him. Cronin was also close to Isaac Don Levine, having helped found Plain Talk, the magazine of the China Lobby. Levine, of course, was Chambers' mentor.

At any rate, I continued my research on the Hiss case after completing my dissertation, and interviewed Levine and others involved in the case. This was an independent venture, and I didn't meet Hiss until my research was well underway. My purpose was simply to understand the case and hopefully to help resolve it. My major focus was the origins of the case before 1948, and I came up with considerable evidence that a vendetta had been planned

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by the leaders of the China Lobby because Hiss was a symbol of the "sell-out" of Chiang Kai-shek at Yalta and San Francisco. A summary of that research is in the memos I have enclosed.

Last spring, when I first met Hiss, he mentioned to me the suspicions that he and others had about Horace Schmahl, and I began to look into Schmahl's background. When I found in the Times mention of Schmahl's possible involvement in the Galindez case in the late 1950s, I contacted former Congressman Charlie Porter of Oregon, one of whose constituents was killed because of involvement in the Galindez case (Gerald Murphy, the pilot). Porter referred my letter to a man named Alan Fitzgibbon, who lives in Bethesda and is writing a book on the Galindez case. Fitzgibbon had done much research on Schmahl and had requested FBI files on him -- that request is still pending.

Schmahl was interviewed in late 1973 by Chip Lockwood, who has been investigating the Hiss case for 25 years, and he stated to Lockwood, according to notes of the interviews, that Donovan had hired him to find somebody capable of making a typewriter. This man, Schmahl said, was Adam Kunze. I found in the G-2 files in the National Archives evidence that Kunze was a Nazi sympathizer. I also learned from G-2 files that Schmahl had worked for Donovan before the war, and the CIA has informed me that Schmahl was in the OSS in 1943 and 1944 as a trainer, probably in wiretapping and surveillance techniques.

A couple of weeks ago, I arranged for Lockwood and Nick Egelson, a journalist who has written a book on the FBI (State Secrets) to interview Schmahl again, and Schmahl indicated to Hiss that he would talk with them. However, when they went to Ft. Lauderdale, Schmahl's family refused them access to Schmahl, claiming extreme ill health. So I wrote Schmahl myself, asking for an interview. The day he received my letter, he called a lawyer in Hiss' former law firm of Debevoise, Plimpton, and threatened to sue me for libel. This indicates to me that either 1) Schmahl's story to Lockwood about Donovan was a hoax, in full or part, and he didn't want to be questioned closely about it by Egelson, or 2) that he had learned that we knew a great deal about his background and was afraid of exposure. Perhaps there is another reason, but at the moment he is quite hostile to us.

Aside from Schmahl, there are several other angles to the case we are pursuing. Allen Weinstein of Smith College has a suit pending against the FBI for release of the Hiss files, and is in Washington this week (Feb. 12-13) taking depositions from the FBI people for his suit. This will probably be very productive. I am also asking Rodino to release the HUAC files on Hiss, since Judiciary now has control of them. If this is successful, then we can not only see the files but also examine the Pumpkin Papers microfilms, which we think might have been produced in 1947 rather than 1938.

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I'm also trying to learn more about Kunze -- the woman who replaced Kunze in his shop after he died told a Hiss case investigator that the FBI found the Woodstock in his shop and took it. I'm not sure of the date this happened, which is important. I have also located Steve Broady, for whose detective agency Schmahl worked when he was assigned to the Hiss law firm, but we haven't interviewed him yet. Broady is a convicted wiretapper and I don't know if he will talk.

I would be very interested to know what information you have about Kunze, especially if he worked with the OSS, which I suspect, or if you know anyone who might know that. I will certainly pursue the possibility of examining the HUAC payroll vouchers for any record of Schmahl.

I'm not an experienced investigator, although I'm learning a lot as I do this work. So your comments are quite helpful, and I agree about bulldogging the crucial points. I share your reluctance to believe that Donovan was directly involved, and perhaps Schmahl was making this up for some reason, but they did work together and Donovan did have close ties to the China Lobby. I wrote Otto Doering in December, Donovan's chief aide in the OSS and now a member of the Donovan law firm, asking him if there were any records of Donovan's involvement in the Friends of New Germany (predecessor to the Bund) and the China Lobby. This letter was undoubtedly a mistake, since I told Doering that I had seen Schmahl's G-2 file and cited Schmahl as the source of the allegation about Donovan and the Hiss case. I wouldn't be surprised if Doering passed this on to the Schmahl, and that this explains Schmahl's hostility.

I'd be very grateful if you could give me your comments on the enclosed material and the questions in this letter, and add any questions that occur to you. One other point I raise solely as speculation, for your reaction. Dick Gregory recently said he had a picture of Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis in Dallas at the assassination scene. The veracity of this picture I don't know. But...Hunt was undergoing training in the OSS at the time, I think, that Schmahl was a trainer. And, if Schmahl's possible involvement in the Galindez case and his present business as a marine supplier in Ft. Lauderdale has anything to do with CIA activities in the Caribbean, that might explain Richard Helm's horror when he was asked by a friend of a Hiss case investigator whether he knew of Schmahl -- "don't ever mention that name again, it is very dangerous," was his reply. Could this have anything to do with Dallas?

Thanks again for your letter. I hope we can keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Peter Irons
Peter Irons

*PS: I'd also very much appreciate
a copy of the part of the Dulles
transcript relating to Hiss. When will
your book come out?*